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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide the American teacher or sponsor with information on the use, limitations and availability of dictionaries that can be used by Indochinese refugees. The introductory material contains descriptions of both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, a discussion of the inadequacies of bilingual dictionaries in the areas of meaning, equivalence and grammar, and advice on choosing a dictionary. The annotated bibliography includes 16 bilingual dictionaries and glossaries in Vietnamese, Cambodian, Khmer, Lao, Meo, Hmong and English; one in Vietnamese, English and French; one in Hmong and French; and two monolingual English dictionaries for ESL students. A list of publishers' addresses is appended. (AMH)

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# Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

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GENERAL INFORMATION SERIES: A Selected Bibliography of Dictionaries

The Indochinese refugee, in trying to cope with his language problems in the United States, nearly always feels that what he needs most is a dictionary. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide the American teacher or sponsor with information on the use, limitations and availability of dictionaries which can be used by the refugee -- if not to solve all his language problems at once, at least to give him something to hold while he is solving them some other way.

The dictionaries in the annotated list below are either monolingual or bilingual. Monolingual dictionaries are those in which the words and their definitions are both in the same language. They are generally designed to be used by a native speaker of the language, and range from unabridged dictionaries, which aim at listing all the words in use in the language at the time of publication, to dictionaries with very limited scope, such as those written for preschool children.

Bilingual dictionaries are those in which the words are listed in one language, but their definitions (as well as information on grammar and pronunciation) are given in another language. They are desinged to be used by someone who is learning one or the other of the languages. A bilingual Vietnamese-English dictionary, for example, lists Vietnamese words (in Vietnamese alphabetical order), and gives English equivalents, definitions and grammatical information for them; it is useful to the student of Vietnamese or English.

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Bilingual dictionaries are either one-way or two-way. One-way bilingual dictionaries have just one list of words, say, a list of Vietnamese words with English definitions. Two-way bilingual dictionaries contain two lists, for example, a list of Vietnamese words with English definitions, and a list of English words with Vietnamese definitions. (If the dictionary is at all extensive, the lists will be in two volumes, to make it easier to carry them around.) The title of a dictionary will ordinarily indicate whether it is one- or two-way, and which way it goes: a Vietnamese-English dictionary has a Vietnamese word list with English definitions, an English-Vietnamese dictionary has an English word list with Vietnamese definitions, and a Vietnames-English, English-Vietnamese dictionary has both. The preface and explanatory notes of a dictionary will be in the same language as the definitions.

## Problems with Bilingual Dictionaries

A bilingual dictionary differs from a monolingual dictionary in that in a bilingual dictionary, equivalents are given whenever possible. In a monolingual dictionary, for example, the word dog is defined ("....common domestic animal...

a friend of man, of which there are many breeds..."); in an English-Vietnamese bilingual dictionary, however, the Vietnamese equivalent of dog, i.e. chó, is given, with nothing about domestic animals mentioned at all. In many cases, this is all that is necessary; the Vietnamese learner of English already knows what a chó is, so when he looks up the word for dog, being told that it is a chó is fine for his purposes. Likewise, if the Vietnamese learner of English wants to find out what the English word for chó is, his Vietnamese-English bilingual dictionary will tell him that it is dog, and he can proceed with whatever he was saying.

Words like dog which translate fairly straightforwardly across languages are for the most part nouns and verbs denoting common objects and actions; as long as the language learner restricts himself to talking about mundane items and activities, his bilingual dictionary will not lead him astray. Even on this level, however, problems can arise.

The most obvious problem stems from the fact that in every language words have multiple meanings. The best a bilingual dictionary can do is to list the equivalents for these multiple meanings, usually with the most frequently occurring meanings ordered before the less frequently occurring ones. The dictionary user must depend on the situation to supply him with enough clues to enable him to choose the right equivalent, and very often the situation doesn't. In one English-Vietnamese dictionary, for example, dog is translated as chó, the Vietnamese equivalent for dog as we mentioned above; an alternative equivalent is giá để củi trong lò sưởi, which translates as "fireplace rack"; a third equivalent is người đểu-giả, which translates as "unscrupulous person". (Dog, in British English, can mean "fireplace rack" and "unscrupulous person", as well as "dog". The English half of this dictionary is British rather than American.) The Vietnamese learner of English, given the sentence "There's a dog", has only the situation to tell him which of the three equivalents is the right one. Conversely, the Vietnamese learner of English who looks up chó in a Vietnamese-English dictionary is given the English equivalents dog and unscrupulous person, and he has to choose between them. The Vietnamese is as much at a loss deciding between dog and unscrupulous person as the American is who is deciding between chó, giá để củi trong lò sưởi, and người đểu-giả.

Often these decisions are arbitrary ones, and the results are the sorts of "fractured English" like I'd like someone book, we need it in the English program the present. (There are countless examples of "fractured Vietnamese" and "fractured Cambodian" as well.) The only way for, say, a Vietnamese to guard against mistakes of this sort is to look up a word first in a Vietnamese-English dictionary, and then look up each of the laternative equivalents in an English-Vietnamese dictionary to double-check its meaning. All of which is tedious and time consuming to the point of being counter-productive.

Another unavoidable problem in using a bilingual dictionary is that very often there is no exact equivalent in one language for a word in the other, and the dictionary has to list a definition. In English, for example, there is no direct equivalent for the word cái, which functions grammatically like the word piece in a piece of cake. One of the Vietnamese-English dictionaries defines it as "word denoting inanimate object"; a Vietnamese refugee inexperienced in the

ways of dictionaries might well translate the phrase một cái quần -- which means "pair of pants" -- as "one word denoting inanimate object trousers"!

The most obvious difficulty with using dictionaries is that there is more to communicating in a language than getting the words right. The following excerpt from a letter in the National Indochinese Clearinghouse files demonstrates this: "I'm is refugees from Vietnam please help me gives some books..."; the author clearly intended to say "please help me by giving me some books", but we were able to figure this out only because he couldn't have meant anything else. Although all the words in this sentence are all right, the grammatical trappings which indicate the relationships among the words are either lacking or in the wrong place, and as a consequence the sentence doesn't say what it means. Learning where the grammatical trappings of a sentence should go is something that a dictionary can't teach; in other words, a dictionary is not a substitute for a language class.

## Choosing a Dictionary

Unfortunately, really excellent bilingual dictionaries simply don't exist, except for languages like German-English and French-English, where there has been sufficient interaction between the countries speaking the languages to warrant the expense of the extensive research necessary to produce a good bilingual dictionary. Nonetheless, an intelligent user can get something out of even a very poor quality dictionary, if he is aware of its limitations. As we mentioned before, words for common, ordinary things and actions are likely to have direct equivalents in both languages; these are the items the newly-arrived refugee will be looking up, and they are also the ones most successfully dealt with in a bilingual dictionary.

The psychological value of simply having a dictionary in one's hands should not be discounted, especially with highly educated refugees. Often, a dictionary serves -- like the "courage medicine" the Wizard of Oz gave the Cowardly Lion -- not so much to provide knowledge that wasn't there, but to provide the confidence to use the knowledge.

In any event, the refugee should be encouraged to switch from a bilingual dictionary to a monolingual dictionary as soon as possible, not only because it's better for his English, but also because there is such a wide range of excellent monolingual dictionaries, he can pick one exactly suited to his age and interests.

To bridge the gap between a bilingual dictionary and a monolingual dictionary designed for native speakers of English, the refugee should be given a monolingual English dictionary especially designed for those who are learning English as a Foreign Language. The refugee who arrives in the United States able to read and write English pretty well can use one of these dictionaries from the start and, if he learnes to use it to its fullest potential, he will appreciate the wealth of information it contains -- not just on words, their definitions and grammatical characteristics, but also in areas problematic to foreigners, such as abbreviations, affixes, weights, measures, common first names, country names, and so on.

1. NGUYỄN ĐÌNH HÒA. Vietnamese-English Dictionary. Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1966. $8.50.

   A simple and concise dictionary intended for use by the English-speaking student of Vietnamese. One-way only, it does not have definitions from English to Vietnamese. Guide to Vietnamese pronunciation is included. Approximately 27,000 entries.

   A revised and enlarged etition (approx. 43,000 entries) is available from the Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL 62901, at $15.00 (cloth). (618)453-2281.

2. LÊ BÁ KÔNG., Standard Pronuncing English-Vietnamese Dictionary (Tự-Điển Tiêu-Chuẩn Anh-Việt). Houston, TX: Zieleks Publishing Co., 1975. 494 pp. $5.95.

   Approximately 12,000 entries. A new, revised and enlarged edition of the dictionary which has been in circulation in the U.S. Provides guides to Vietnamese pronunciation and tones, and an outline of Vietnamese grammar for the benefit of the English-speaking student of Vietnamese.

3. LÊ BÁ KÔNG and LÊ BÁ KHANH. Standard Pronuncing Vietnamese-English Dictionary (Tự-Điển Tiêu-Chuẩn Việt-Anh). Houston, TX: Zieleks Publishing Co., 1975. 400 pp. $5.45.

   A new, revised and enlarged edition of the dictionary in circulation in the U.S., intended for the English speaker. One-way only, does not contain English-Vietnamese section. Approximately 9,000 entries.

4. LÊ BÁ KÔNG and LÊ BÁ KHANH. Standard Pronuncing English-Vietnamese/Vietnamese English Dictionary. Houston, TX: Zieleks Publishing Co., 1975. 900 pp., hard cover. $16.50.

   This dictionary is a combination of the Standard Pronuncing English-Vietnamese Dictionary and the Standard Pronuncing Vietnamese-English Dictionary, mentioned above, presented as one volume. Includes English pronunciation guides for the benefit of the Vietnamese speaker. Approximately 20,000 entries.

5. LÊ BÁ KÔNG. Vietnamese-English Conversational Dictionary (Tự-Điển Đàm-Thoại Việt-Anh). Houston, TX: Zieleks Publishing Co., 1975. 414 pp. $4.45.

   Vietnamese-English only, this volume defines frequently-encountered words and phrases in Vietnamese; definitions include examples of use. Also includes pronunciation and English grammar guides to irregular verbs, affixes, pronouns, interrogatories, etc. Approximately 6,000 entries.

6. NGUYỄN VĂN KHÔN. Usual Vietnamese-English/English-Vietnamese Dictionary (Việt-Anh Anh-Việt Tự-Điển Thong-Dung). Glendale, CA: Dainam Company, 1975. 1616 pp. $14.95.

   A reprint of a two-way dictionary originally published by Khai-Trí in Saigon. Includes pronunciation guides for both Vietnamese and English (British); does not provide guide to phonetic symbols used. Approximately 56,000 entries.

7. Vietnamese-Dictionary (Tự Điển Anh-Việt). Hanoi, Vietnam: The Vietnam Social Studies Committee, Linguistics Institute, 1975. The Social Studies Publishing House, 1959 pp., hard cover. Available through Librairie Sudestasie, rue Cardinal Lemoine, Paris, FRANCE 190 FF. (Approx. #42.00).

This is by far the most complete and up-to-date Vietnamese-English dictionary available from North Vietnam. According to the preface, this is the work of 27 members of the Foreign Language Department of the National Linguistic Institute, and reviewed by a committee of four. The bibliography consists of six English and American dictionaries, including The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English and Webster's New World Dictionary; two French-English dictionaries; one English-Russian; one English-Chinese and four Vietnamese dictionaries including Nguyen Van Khon's English-Vietnamese Dictionary. It includes an introduction explaining the structure of the dictionary and a guide to the Daniel Jones phonetic symbols. A detailed abbreviation table with Vietnamese-English explanations precedes the text which contains approx. 65,000 entries.

8. English-French-Vietnamese Technical Dictionary. (Tự Điển Kỹ-Thuật Anh-Pháp-Việt). Richmond, VA: 1977. Vietnamese Engeering Society, 3835 Meadowvale Boulevard, Richmond, VA. 23234. 359 pp. $7.50.

This is a technical comparative glossary with frequent illustrations and many explanations in Vietnamese. There is no mention of bibliography nor qualifications of the authors.

9. Cambodian-English Glossary. Washington, D.C.: HEW Refugee Task Force, 1975. Free of charge. Available after August 8, 1978.

A two-way glossary providing brief translation equivalents, without detail or pronunciation guides. Utilizes both Cambodian and English alphabets, so a familiarity with both is necessary. The Glossary was designed to be used with specific Cambodian/English material, so equivalents are at times unavoidably misleading. Approximately 20,000 entries.

10. HEADLEY, ROBERT K., JR. et al. Cambodian-English Dictionary. Forest Grove, Oregon: Catholic University of America, in association with International Scholarly Book Services, Inc., 1977. 1495 pp. 2 Vols., $49.00.

A large, carefully-researched Cambodian-English dictionary, based on the Khmer dictionary of the Buddhist Institute (1967-68), and amplified from several other sources. A typical entry presents the Khmer word, followed by a transcription, the word's grammatical class, a definition or definitions, phrases and idioms in which the word appears, and, when known, the foreign word from which the Khmer word was borrowed. Some entries include synonyms, alternate pronunciations, usage indicators, and other pertinent information. The introductory pages include brief sketches of Khmer phonology and syntax, information on the Khmer script, and a bibliography of sources on the language.

11. HUFFMAN, FRANKLIN E. and IM PROUN. Cambodian-English Glossary. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977. 160 pp. $10.00

This is the glossary of the authors' Cambodian Literary Reader and Glossary, printed separately from the readings. The glossary is Cambodian-English only, and as the words are taken from literary sources, it is low in items having to do with 20th Century American life.

12. HUFFMAN, FRANKLIN E., and IM PROUM. English-Khmer Dictionary. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978. 690 pp. $20.00.

A one-way dictionary of 40,000 entries and sub-entries, designed for Cambodians learning English. Each entry contains a word, its part of speech, and its equivalent in Khmer. Care has been taken to provide clarifying contexts for each different meaning of a word. There's a brief description of Khmer and guides to use of the dictionary, at the beginning; an appendix explaining relationships between the Khmer alphabet and pronunciation; and another appendix detailing the translation system devised for cataloguing Khmer publications in U.S. library systems.

13. KERR, ALLEN D. Lao-English Dictionary. Forest Grove, Oregon: Catholic University of America Press in association with International Scholarly Book Services, Inc., 1972. 2 Vols. $42.00.

An extensive, updated one-way dictionary, containing about 25,000 entries. Presentation of Lao is in the roman alphabet; tones are indicated by means of a simple and readily understandable system, with a minimum of phonetic symbols.

14. MARCUS, RUSSELL. English-Lao, Lao-English Dictionary. Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1971. 416 pp. $6.75.

Two-way dictionary. English-Lao section contains 5,000 entries especially selected for the use of the foreigner. Uses similar phonetic symbols as described above for Kerr dictionary. The Lao-English section also is a carefully selected list. Includes a section on the rules for alphabetizing Lao words and notes about the language, including consonant-vowel structure, pronunciation, tone marks, and punctuation. This volume is currently out of print; reprint pending. May still be available in some bookstores.

15. BERTRAIS-CHARRIER, YVES. Dictionnaire Hmong (Mèo Blanc) - Francais. Vientiane: Mission Catholique, 1964. Distributed in the U.S. by The Cellar Book Shop, 18090 Wyoming, Detroit, Michigan, 48228. (Write directly to the shop: the book costs $20.00, and postage is paid by the shop for orders of $20. or more.)

The dictionary lists Hmong words, and pharses the words occur in, with idiomatic translations into French, but no grammar or pronunciation notes. The words and phrases are written in the Roman alphabet commonly used to write Hmong in the U.S. - and there are about 30,000 entries; this is the biggest dictionary, in terms of number of words and pharses, of the three. There are no appendices, and just a brief introudction outlining the sources of vocabulary and explaining the uses to which the dictionary can be put. (It also explains, among other things, that cuss words have been left out, even though they're frequently used...)

The dictionary will be of most use as a source of information on Hmong vocabulary for Americans who speak or read French. It won't help Hmongs much, except as a very roundabout approach to English for Hmongs who speak French.

16. KEIMBACH, ERNEST E. White Meo-English Dictionary. Data Paper No. 75, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., 1969. (Order the book directly from the Southeast Asia Program, 120 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853; it costs $5.00, and postage will be paid.)

Hmong words, and phrases containing them, are listed, with translations into English. There are some grammatical notes. The entries are in the same Roman alphabet as the Bertrais dictionary, and there's a guide to pronunciation in the introduction. The introduction also includes brief notes on the language, ans a short bibliography (mostly on comparative linguistic studies of Hmong and related languages). There are several appendices; they contain, besides information contained in this Guide: patterns of tone changes; more classifiers than we list; sime useful words and phrases; some useful terse expressions; White Hmong proverbs, with idiomatic translations into English; a long list, with examples, of post-verbal intensifiers; kinship charts; and an English-Hmong classified vocabulary in such matters as anatomy, fauna, building, clothing and sewing, and so on.

This dictionary, while not as extensive as the others, is the most accessible: it's in English, it's geared tp non-linguists and non-anthropologists, and the price is right. (It does need re-binding, as it falls apart as you turn the pages!) Americans will find it a fascinating source of down-to-earth information on things Hmong. The vocabulary is for natural reasons not terribly useful to Hmongs learning English in the U.S.; as it was collected in Hmong villages, it obviously doesn't contain Hmong words for American artifacts, which is what the Hmong English-learner is in most need of at this point.

17. LYMAN, THOMAS A. Dictionary of Mong-Njua. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1974. (Orderable from Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 07716; write to them for a form, which says that you agree that the book is not returnable; send the form and $68. back, and the book will be sent to you from the Netherlands in about ten weeks.)

This is a work for linguists and anthropologists. Mong Njua (= Blue/Green Hmong) words and phrases are listed in an alphabet which is a cross between a phonemic and phonetic transcription; the words and phrases are translated into idiomatic English, and borrowings from other languages are noted. The introduction contains a guide to the alphabet used; some information on the structures of compound words; a chart of correlations between the alphabet used and the commonly used Roman alphabet; and explanations of ways the words have been classified and listed in the dictionary; an extensive bibliography (mostly anthropological) of various Hmong groups throughout China and Southeast Asia; and a list of studies of other ethnic groups in Southeast Asia; and a list of Hmong sub-groups. In the appendices, there are - besides information contained in this Guide - English-Mong Njua lists of body terms, colors, ethnic names, minerals and oils, tools, instruments and weapons; Mong Njua-English lists of terms pertaining to weaving, vegetation, sickness and medicine, rice, opium and related artifacts, kin numeratives, the husking-treadle, and compass points.

The price will probably put this dictionary out of reach of most, but colleges and universities in areas where there are lots of Hmongs will find this a useful acquisition. Non-linguists and non-anthropologists will have a rough time with the alphabet, as it has a lot of unfamiliar symbols; Hmongs won't be able to read it at all.

18. HORNBY, A. S. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, New Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974. $10.95. Hard cover.

Universally used and respected dictionary for ESL students. Carefully designed to meet the needs of the ESL student, it includes a lengthy introduction which explains how to use the dictionary, an extremely practical, useful guide to pronunciation, appendices of such aspects of English as irregular verbs, affixes, and geographical names, and attention throughout to providing examples and contextual information, which all combine with other features to make the dictionary the most useful work available to the student.

19. SHAW, JOHN R. and JANET SHAW. The Horizon Ladder Dictionary of the English Language. Second edition. New York: New American Library, 1970. $1.25.

Intended for adult students of ESL. Special sections (in English) on English grammar, place names, and common abbreviations. Illustrative sentences clarify definitions. Entries include the 5,000 most frequently-occurring English words.

## PUBLISHERS' ADDRESSES

1. The Cellar Book Shop, 18090 Wyoming, Detroit, MI 48228.
2. Dai Nam Company, 1145 N. Viola Ave., Glendale, CA 91202.
3. HEW Refugee Task Force, Publications Room 1124, Donahoe Bldg., 330 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201. (202) 472-2410.
4. Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N. J. 07716.
5. International Scholarly Book Services, Inc., P. O. Box 555, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116 (503) 357-7192.
6. Librairie Sudestasie, 17 rue Cardinal Lemoine, 75005 Paris, France 325.18.04
7. New American Library, 1301 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019 (212) 956-3800.
8. Oxford University Press, 1600 Pollitt Dr., Fairlawn, N.J. 07410. (202) 564-6680.
9. Southeast Asia Program, 120 Uris Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14853
10. Charles E. Tuttle Co., P. O. Box 470, Rutland, VT 05701 (802) 773-8930.
11. Vietnamese Engineering Society in America, 3835 Meadowdale Blvd., Richmond, VA 23234.
12. Zieleks Publishing Co., 11215 Sageland Dr., Houston, TX 77089 (713) 481-3783.

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